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88th plenary meeting
Friday, 23 May 2014 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 115 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(a) Election of seven members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

Note by the Secretary-General (A/68/302/Add.2)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): Pursuant to General Assembly decision 42/450, of 17 December 1987, and upon nomination by the Economic and Social Council, the Assembly elects the members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Members will recall that at its 40th plenary meeting, held on 30 October 2013, the General Assembly elected five members to the Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2014. Members will also recall that, at its 61st plenary meeting, held on 6 December 2013, the Assembly elected Morocco as a member of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2014 and expiring on 31 December 2016. Members will further recall that by its decision 2013/201 E of 7 November 2013, the Economic and Social Council postponed the nomination of one member from the Asia-Pacific States for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2014 and expiring on 31 December 2016.

In that connection, the Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/68/302/Add.2. As indicated in that document, by its decision 2014/201 A of 23 April 2014, the Economic and Social Council nominated the Republic of Korea for election by the General Assembly for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2016.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections should be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations. However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election. In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on the basis of dispensing with the secret ballot?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare the Republic of Korea elected as a member of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a term of office beginning on 23 May 2014 and expiring on 31 December 2016?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): Members are reminded that the Economic and Social Council

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decided to further postpone the nomination of three members from Western European and other States for election by the General Assembly: two members for terms beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2014, and one member for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2015.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 115.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now turn to sub-item (a) of agenda item 23, "Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)", in order to hold a meeting on the overall theme, "Achieving poverty eradication through full employment and decent work for all in the post-2015 development agenda", in accordance with resolutions 63/230 of 19 December 2008, 67/224 of 21 December 2012 and 68/226 of 20 December 2013.

Members will recall that the Assembly concluded its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 23 at its 71st plenary meeting on 20 December 2013. In order for the Assembly to hold the meeting on the overall theme "Achieving poverty eradication through full employment and decent work for all in the post-2015 development agenda", it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 23.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 23?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): Members will further recall that at its 2nd plenary meeting on 20 September 2013, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (a) of agenda item 23 to the Second Committee.

In order to proceed to hold the meeting, may I also take it that the Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (a) of agenda item 23 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 23 (*continued*)

Eradication of poverty and other development issues

(a) Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)

Meeting on achieving poverty eradication through full employment and decent work for all in the post-2015 development agenda

The Acting President: This morning, it is my distinct pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, who very much regrets that he is not able to be here with us.

"Poverty eradication has been at the heart of the United Nations development agenda since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000 (resolution 55/2). That paramount goal will continue to guide us as we craft a new agenda for the post-2015 era. Therefore it is both fitting and, indeed, necessary that today we gather for this high-level meeting of the General Assembly on "Achieving poverty eradication through full employment and decent work for all in the post-2015 development agenda".

"Our meeting today contributes to the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017), as mandated by General Assembly resolution 68/226. The resolution repeatedly reminds us that poverty eradication is a matter of urgency, and 'an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of all humankind'. There is no greater task or immediate priority before the global community.

"During this one-day session, we will look both back and forward. We will aim to assess and share best practices from past and ongoing work and, at the same time, look towards future expectations and opportunities related to the post-2015 development agenda.

"Collectively mobilizing around the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has focused our efforts on reducing poverty worldwide and produced commendable and noteworthy progress. The most recent World Bank estimates confirm that the MDG target on poverty was achieved at the global level in 2010, five years before

the target date. Since 1990, 700 million people have been lifted out of extreme poverty. However, not all have benefited from this progress, which has been uneven, both within and among countries. Poverty remains high and persistent in many parts of the world, with approximately 1.2 billion people still living on less than $1.25 a day, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

"With the deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals just around the corner, and Member States in the process of shaping a strong post-2015 development agenda, our efforts towards poverty eradication are at a critical juncture. We must focus on completing the unfinished business of the MDGs and addressing new and emerging challenges. Yet the work we do will be lasting and irreversible only if the agenda is crafted and implemented in a holistic manner, incorporating economic, social and environmental dimensions. If post-2015 development is to be sustainable, we have to address a number of critical issues, many of which the Assembly will discuss today.

"As recognized by the theme of today's event, some of the greatest challenges to poverty eradication are related to high unemployment, rampant underemployment and informality, as well as rising inequality in many countries. There is widespread recognition that sustained, inclusive and job-rich growth is a prerequisite for reducing poverty. Given the lasting impacts of the global financial and economic crisis, and the largely jobless recovery, inclusive growth and employment should be at the centre of the new development framework.

"Promoting industrial development and economic diversification, as well as growth in agricultural productivity and investments in infrastructure development, can help create more and better jobs, and ultimately reduce poverty. Greater coherence among macroeconomic, trade and social policies is another important element.

"For people living in poverty, labour is often their main asset. Engaging in productive employment and decent work empowers them with the means to improve their lives. Workers holding a decent job are not only personally but also socially empowered, giving them a voice that enables their active participation in decision-making that affects their well-being. Young people in particular are increasingly struggling to enter the labour market and youth unemployment rates are at an all-time high.

"The burdens of poverty also carry certain prejudices and biases with them. We hear about the feminization of poverty. We know certain groups are more vulnerable to falling into poverty and that specific circumstances are more likely to foster it. Ongoing discussions on the post-2015 agenda have recognized the damaging consequences of increasing inequality between and within countries, and that future strategies must strive to include all members of society and contribute towards shared prosperity.

"Growing inequality between rural and urban areas and among social groups undermines growth and social cohesion, and makes it harder for people and families to break the cycle of poverty. It compromises the health, nutrition and education of large sections of society, as well as limiting job prospects and participation in social, political and economic life for persons and communities in disadvantaged situations. It has also led to the consistent exclusion of women, persons with disabilities, older persons, youth and indigenous peoples, among others.

"Consultations on drawing up the post-2015 development agenda have therefore emphasized the importance of implementing social protection measures with a focus on the most marginalized groups. Ensuring the equality of economic opportunity and building the resilience of the poor to natural disasters have also featured prominently. However, for such transformations to take root, social, economic and political institutions must be inclusive and accountable, and promote transparent and participatory decision-making.

"The multifaceted nature of poverty is complex and intricate, but I hope I have given the Assembly some ideas for consideration today. I am sure Members will have many of their own to add.

"Before concluding, let me highlight the format of today's meeting. The morning is reserved for the General Assembly formal meeting and members will have the opportunity to express their views and comments. In the afternoon, members are invited to participate in an interactive, multi-stakeholder

panel discussion, followed by a brief closing segment. Members' valuable ideas, out-of-the-box thinking and shared experiences will all bring us closer to resolving an urgent and pressing problem. The burdens of poverty must not be borne by the poor alone."

(*spoke in French*)

I should like to remind Members that statements in the national capacity should be limited to three minutes. When speaking on behalf of a group, statements should not exceed five minutes.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Group would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for his engagement on the post-2015 development agenda.

The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to the post-2015 development agenda, which must be in accordance with the principles and dimensions of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), "The future we want" (resolution 66/288).

The Group of 77 and China recognizes that poverty is an affront to human dignity and stresses that poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and indispensable to sustainable development. The Group attaches the highest priority to poverty eradication in the post-2015 United Nations development agenda being supported by renewed, effective and adequate means of implementation and strengthened global partnership for development, which entails, among other objectives, the promotion of employment and decent work for all. In this regard, we recall the importance of addressing the multiple dimensions of poverty. In order to ensure effective poverty eradication, the interlinkages between the multidimensional aspects of poverty must take into account the different national circumstances of countries.

The Group of 77 and China strongly believes that employment is a leading determinant of social and economic growth and development. We therefore emphasize that it is necessary to address inequalities both within and among countries in order to reduce poverty. While robust and stable economic growth is necessary to reduce poverty, it is not sufficient in and of itself. Economic growth must be sustainable, inclusive and equitable, and create full employment and decent work and livelihood opportunities for all, especially the poor and vulnerable members of society. Most importantly, the benefits and opportunities of economic growth must be shared among and extended to include vulnerable and minority groups in society.

The employment-generating capacity of growth strategies is essential for achieving sustainable, sustained and inclusive economic growth, which when fairly distributed, can bring millions of people out of poverty worldwide. Despite a decline in the number of the working poor — namely, those employed but living below the $2-per-day poverty line — the majority of workers in the developing world remain in informal and vulnerable jobs. The Rio+20 outcome recognizes the promotion of full and productive employment and decent work for all as a key priority.

The Group also believes that employment objectives need to become central to global actions and mechanisms. These objectives need the support of international cooperation that assists developing countries, first, through actions at the level of international economic, financial, trade, technology and social systems to support and enable developing countries' efforts; and, secondly, by developed countries' refraining from actions by that create barriers to developing countries' efforts and progress. The Group also understands that employment goals and targets should be geared to providing young people and women with skills for jobs. Within the broader objective of full employment and decent work, there should also be a global strategy, consisting of active policies and targets, to secure productive employment for both women and youth.

In this framework, the Group of 77 and China is sure that a positive outcome will result from this meeting and highly encourages the participants to take into account the position of the Group for further discussions under this topic.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Beviglia Zampetti (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

Let me first recall our commitment to engaging with all partners towards a post-2015 development agenda

that should reinforce the international community's commitment to poverty eradication and sustainable development and set out a single comprehensive and coherent framework for effective delivery and results at all levels. We need to work towards sustainable development to eradicate poverty in all its dimensions, including ending extreme poverty in a single generation, and to ensure the sustainable prosperity and well-being of all people within the planetary boundaries. With regard to the specific theme of today's high-level meeting, let me share the following key messages.

Poverty eradication, the reduction of inequalities and shared prosperity for all are key parts of the internal and external dimension of EU policies. While substantial progress has been made, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals has been unevenly distributed, not only among countries but also within countries. The benefits of economic growth have not always been adequately shared. Simply lifting national averages does not guarantee eradication of poverty, which remains a pressing global and national challenge. We must strive to leave no one behind, involving and delivering progress for all social groups and income quintiles, and secure equality of opportunity for all women and men. We resolve to target the most vulnerable, and among and within developing countries, those who have been left farthest behind.

Addressing discrimination and inequalities through a human rights-based approach will be essential. Unemployment, precarious employment, access to basic services and social protection, access to human development services, productive resources and an inadequate standard of living are still of universal concern. Decent work, productive jobs and social protection are key elements for ensuring basic living standards and driving inclusive and sustainable growth. Not all jobs are decent and productive jobs.

Increasing productivity can raise living standards and reduce working poverty and vulnerable employment. In particular, we need a better understanding and measurement of the quality of work, taking into account pay, working conditions, health and safety, form of employment — whether formal or informal — and social security arrangements. We further emphasize the importance of paying wages that allow workers to live in dignity as well as ensuring equal pay for equal work. Consideration should also be given to how best to incorporate the respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work.

We also stress the importance of tackling unemployment — in particular youth unemployment and inactivity, which have reached unprecedented levels in many countries — and of promoting decent work for young people. This can be done notably through the promotion of and equal access to quality education for girls and boys, including vocational training, the promotion of green jobs, access to basic economic services, the creation of an enabling environment for the private sector, and inclusive and sustainable industrial development. We are convinced that the International Labour Organization (ILO) Call for Action on Youth Employment and the ILO Global Jobs Pact give useful recommendations, and we call on Governments to put them into practice.

We are committed to implementing ILO Recommendation No. 202 concerning national floors for social protection, in particular increasing the coverage of social protection floors and gradual implementation of higher standards of social guarantees. Social protection lies at the heart of the European social model. It is an investment in human development and inclusive sustainable economic growth. Social protection systems can successfully promote higher labour market participation, both through active labour market measures and protection against vulnerability and social risk, which provide the level of social security that all people need in order to enhance their livelihoods.

Everyone has the right to social security, as stated in article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Social protection is key to reducing inequalities and ensuring that those beneficiaries who can are enabled to participate in productive economic activity and employment. Social protection focused on women has notably proven to be particularly positive for family welfare. By providing income security, universal and non-discriminatory access to social services and care, it contributes to tackling inequalities and reducing poverty and to a better management of risks and economic and life cycle shocks.

The role of trade union and employers' organizations and of social dialogue, one of the four pillars of decent work, needs to be given greater recognition, as provided for by the fundamental principles and rights at work promoted by the ILO.

Finally, let me underline the close interlinkages between today's themes and gender equality and the

empowerment of women, including at the political level, as well as the particular situation of persons with disabilities. Special efforts need to be made to ensure women's equal access to employment opportunities and their full participation in the labour force.

Let me also stress the role of civil society organizations, including social partners. They have the capacity to empower, represent, defend and reach out to vulnerable or socially excluded groups. They can also encourage economic and human development as well as social cohesion and innovation. Moreover, those organizations often engage in initiatives to advance participatory democracy for transparent, accountable and legitimate governance, including in fragile situations.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the least developed countries (LDCs). The group of least developed countries associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The group of LDCs commends the President of the General Assembly for organizing today's high-level event focusing on a key priority area for LDCs in the context of the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda. The group wishes to again articulate its position that poverty eradication should remain the first and overarching priority of the post-2015 development agenda.

We are happy to recognize that the poverty reduction target has been achieved globally. However, in the LDCs, more than 47 per cent of the population are still living in extreme poverty, while, as per the target set forth in the related Millennium Development Goal (MDG), that figure should have been reduced to 32 per cent. The absolute number of poor people has increased in many LDCs even during the periods of sustained economic growth and rapid poverty reduction in many parts of the world. According to an estimate by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the number of the extreme poor living in the LDCs, out of the total global poor, increased from 19 per cent in the 1990-1995 period to 30 per cent during the 2005-2010 period.

Such high poverty concentration is expected to be further worsened by projected high population growth. The population of LDCs is expected to nearly double and increase to 1.8 billion between now and 2050 and to 2.9 billion by 2100. Although the LDCs comprise only 12 per cent of the world population, they will account for almost 40 per cent of the global population growth during the next 40 years.

In LDCs, the high economic growth of the past decade has not translated into corresponding levels of employment generation. Therefore, their unemployment rates remain at a higher band range. A study by the International Labour Organization suggests that, in order to achieve MDG 1, LDCs needed a rate of employment growth of 7 per cent and a 2.9 per cent per annum rate of growth over the years 2000-2009.

Full employment and decent work, especially for youth and women, through sustained economic growth and productive capacity-building is vitally important for LDCs to address their poverty. That is the goal being pursued by the Ministerial Conference on New Partnerships for Productive Capacity-building in the LDCs, scheduled to take place in Cotonou from 28 to 31 July 2014. Economic growth should be inclusive and employment-generating. Strong support needs to be extended to micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises. Innovative programmes such as employment guarantee schemes can provide poor workers with a minimum employment floor. The introduction of a basic set of essential social transfers and services, as well as access to credit and finance, can also lead to full employment and decent work for all. LDCs need enhanced international support to build their productive capacities to reach the goal of full employment and decent work.

The group of LDCs is of the view that in the area of international support for poverty eradication, the priority should be guided by the following four key principles.

First, although the absolute number is important, the primary consideration should be the percentage figure, which is statistically more significant. In LDCs, 47 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line, compared to 20 per cent in other developing countries.

Secondly, with regard to countries' capacities to deal with the challenges by themselves, despite sincere efforts the low levels of per capita income, domestic savings and investment and a small tax base limit our domestic resource mobilization efforts considerably. In

2011, the average gross domestic product per capita in LDCs was $800, compared to $4,650 in middle-income countries. For a number of LDCs, more than 75 per cent of their development depends on external support.

Thirdly, with respect to the trends in poverty reduction over the years, we have set forth the scenario on other occasions. The LDCs are stricken by multiple vulnerabilities that constrain their efforts to raise the living standards of their populations. Their problems are systemic in nature and should be addressed as such.

Fourthly, as to countries' initial endowments and characteristics in terms of resources, institutions and pervasive challenges, LDCs are at the top rung of the ladder in terms of challenges and at the bottom rung in terms of capacity.

In the light of those principles, the group would like to stress that the LDCs have a longer way to go than others to reach the target of poverty eradication and to secure full and productive employment and decent work for all. We therefore reiterate our call for the adoption of a universal principle of differential and preferential treatment for LDCs. That is an imperative principle to enable LDCs to achieve the goals and targets of the Istanbul Programme of Action and of the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. Molinas Vega (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The goal of eradicating poverty through employment is the top priority of the Government of the Republic of Paraguay. The success achieved in reducing extreme poverty by 2015 has made it clear that decent employment is the primary factor in reducing extreme poverty. More than 85 per cent of cases in which extreme poverty has been overcome in many countries have been documented as being the direct result of an increase in the employment rate.

What can we learn from the experience of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) process, and how can we apply what we have learned to the post-2015 development agenda? One first point, certainly, is that having global development goals helps to focus national policies on areas that are of central importance, such as the reduction of extreme poverty, among others. Also, reviewing the results achieved in the implementation of the MDGs shows that perhaps we should be more ambitious in our goals of reducing extreme poverty or providing a minimum level of welfare for countries. The fact that we, as the global community, have achieved one MDG five years ahead of the deadline may be an indication of the fact that our goals have been very conservative.

In that respect, we should not only measure the goals for reducing extreme poverty at the international level, such as by adopting the indicator of $1.25 per person per day, but also include indicators that reflect the numbers of those living in poverty at the national level. In Latin America, national figures for those living in poverty are almost double the international figures. That means that to complement the international indicator with an indicator that takes into account national poverty figures, we must be more rigorous and raise the bar for the well-being of our people. In Paraguay's specific case, we met the goal of reducing extreme poverty by 50 per cent several years ago according to the international indicator, but we have not yet reached that goal according to our more rigorous national poverty indicator, although we are close to doing so.

What are the transformative changes that we must make in order to further reduce poverty in this new stage and successfully eradicate it? We believe that there must be at least three transformative changes made at the global level.

First, we need to emphasize early child development. Nothing is more worthwhile and strategic than investing in the first 1,000 days after conception. That investment in human capital will provide the highest rate of return, years later, when those people enter the workforce. The eradication of poverty with decent employment for all requires the universalization, as of now, of comprehensive policies to support early childhood development, in particular in the first 1,000 days.

The second transformative change must be quality education for all. In today's world, it is crucial to be able to apply basic math and science in solving daily problems and to be able to communicate effectively. If we do not eradicate functional illiteracy, we will not be able to eradicate poverty through decent employment.

The third transformative change, which is key, must focus on the promotion of creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation. Having a quality educational system certainly helps, but it is not enough. There is a need to bring the private sector and the educational system into a synergetic relationship that provides the catalyst for entrepreneurship and innovation.

How can we achieve those three transformative changes? Of course, there are no policies that function

the same way and are equally effective in every part of the world, but most likely there are elements in public policy formulation that can indeed be made more universal. In that respect, we need high-quality public policy. We would identify three elements that we believe to be essential to the quality of public policy. Such policies must be transparent, credible and predictable. They must have quality information and provide free access to it, create accountability processes and promote citizens' participation, and comply with contracts and agreements. All of that is essential to achieving the transformative changes needed for poverty eradication. Having a system that allows us to precisely identify the vulnerable populations in each context and in each country is also crucial, and to that end we need to know exactly who those vulnerable people are, by first and last name and location, so that we can get the needed comprehensive assistance to them.

Lastly, public policy needs to be based on and inspired by solidarity. At the domestic level, that means a strong commitment to vulnerable groups, and at the international level, it means a strong commitment to the relatively less developed countries and landlocked countries.

Mr. McLeod (Trinidad and Tobago): On behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, I would like to congratulate the President of the General Assembly on convening this important event, which is integral to our continued discussions of elements to be considered in shaping the post-2015 development agenda.

Trinidad and Tobago is pleased to contribute to this high-level plenary meeting, which focuses, among other things, on decent work, which is one of the pillars and drivers of the work of ministries of labour. The importance of decent work as a mechanism that contributes to poverty eradication and full employment cannot be overemphasized. It is my honour, as Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development of Trinidad and Tobago, to share our position with respect to alleviating poverty through full employment and decent and productive work.

Consistent with the principle that poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere, which is embedded in the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia of the International Labour Organization, and which is still relevant today, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to achieving prosperity for all through people-centred development, so that no-one is left behind.

As a small island developing State confronting the challenges with which, I am sure, we are all familiar and which have been amplified by the effects of the global economic and financial crisis, Trinidad and Tobago is committed not only to growth, but to inclusive growth, which is characterized not only by full employment, but by sustainable employment and quality jobs. In that regard, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has fully embraced the decent work agenda and its four strategic pillars of job creation: rights at work, social protection and social dialogue, with gender equality as a cross-cutting objective, given its potential for effectively linking economic growth and poverty eradication.

I have emphasized at the ILO that there can be no development without labour and no labour without development. A synergistic and symbiotic relationship exists between the two. If as a global community we are to adopt effective poverty eradication measures, then issues related to employment, jobs, income, social protection, rights at work — in essence, decent work — must be a common goal to which our countries must aspire.

As the discussions on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda progress, we continue to support the position of the International Labour Organization in favour of the inclusion of full employment and decent work as goals of the global development agenda. Indeed, we support all efforts, such as this high-level discussion, to promote understanding of the concept and appreciation of the need for policy coherence in respect of labour and labour-related matters, economic growth, and human and social development.

I wish to underscore the importance of labour in global development and the key role of decent work in poverty alleviation and the promotion of human dignity. As we continue to focus on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, let us not forget that the human dimension remains the most critical factor and should be the bedrock of our approach to sustainable development.

Mr. Magid (Israel): Today, around 1 billion people still live in extreme poverty. These are 1 billion men, women and children around the world who are forced to make difficult daily choices between food, medicine, housing and education. For far too many, water is as much a luxury as a source of life. Education is a privilege and brighter futures are almost impossible to

imagine. Extreme poverty is more than a lack of income and opportunity; it is the denial of basic human dignity.

The Millennium Development Goals have shown that we have the power to change that reality. In recent years, poverty rates at the global level have been halved. Working together, we are succeeding in doing what the United Nations was created to do — improving the lives of hundreds of millions of people. Poverty is multidimensional and must be tackled in a holistic manner. It cuts across every issue we tackle at the United Nations, from peace and security to the environment to gender equality. Fortunately, that means that progress in any one of those areas improves the prospects of emerging from poverty, but it also means that if we fail to address even one of those issues, our efforts will certainly fall short of what is possible.

No country, rich or poor, can afford to waste its human resources. Unemployment is surely the greatest waste of those resources, and generating jobs is the most direct way to combat extreme poverty. Youth unemployment poses the most recognizable risk. With few productive options, criminal activities tempt the young, which has a negative impact on the social fabric. Providing high-quality, relevant education is a critical factor for improving employment prospects for youth. It is a long-term investment, but one that ultimately pays. Investing in promoting women's employment is also critical. Research shows that when women are economically empowered, entire nations benefit. When women earn an income, they invest heavily in their children's schooling and health, creating a positive ripple effect across communities.

The Israeli experience shows that human capital is the greatest natural resource. Israel has a very diverse society, and we understand both the challenges and the importance of giving each person the opportunity to contribute according to his or her abilities, regardless of background. Israel has a practical approach to employment and empowerment by using proven strategies and technical, hands-on training to provide people with decent work. One initiative provides specialized second-chance university preparatory courses to disadvantaged populations, including Israeli Arabs, Ethiopian immigrants, persons with disabilities and youths who have grown up in the child welfare system.

Israel considers entrepreneurs to be the backbones of any economy. Israel's foreign assistance programme focuses on teaching entrepreneurship skills and on vocational training. From intensive courses in aquaculture to courses in micro- and small-business enterprise development, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation, MASHAV, has been working to sustainably reduce poverty around the world for over half a century. Israel's activities around the globe are guided by the belief that capacity-building activities are the best way to achieve maximum impact in development programmes. Education leads to empowerment, the surest guarantee of sustainable growth.

We have the proof that the international community, acting in concert, can eradicate poverty. We must think boldly and creatively to deliver on that goal. If we are to realize a life of dignity for all, we must hear the voices and heed the calls of the most marginalized in our societies. Many of the solutions to poverty challenges can be found within the affected communities. Giving them voice and empowering them to solve the problems they face on a daily basis will be critical to achieving our goals and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Mr. Mukerji (India): The eradication of poverty and the promotion of full and productive employment for all are central challenges for the international community in the post-2015 development agenda. As world leaders reaffirmed in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288, annex), those two challenges are also closely interrelated.

As we set the stage for the post-2015 development agenda in this sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, under the leadership of President Ashe, this debate if very timely. We have made impressive gains globally in the fight against poverty and deprivation over the past decade. My own country has contributed to this success in no small measure. Yet even as we speak, over 1.3 billion people, many of whom live in India, continue to live in extreme poverty. That amounts to one in every six people in the world.

Clearly, poverty is not only the greatest global challenge facing the world today; it is a problem that needs to be attacked more directly. Even as we try to address the challenge of sustainable development, we need to be cognizant of the fact that the eradication of poverty remains the overarching objective of the international community, and attention and resources should not be diverted away from that noble endeavour.

Full and productive employment is the surest way to eradicate poverty and give people control over their destinies. Generating employment and decent work is a prerequisite if developing countries are to harness their demographic dividend. Employment is also the bedrock of social inclusion. Robust and sustained economic growth needs to be accompanied by the equitable distribution of the benefits of that growth. That can be done through the creation of new and productive job opportunities for the growing labour force.

Unfortunately, the fragile recovery from the global financial crisis and the continual structural weaknesses in the economies of developing countries, coupled with unfavourable international factors, mean that the global employment situation continues to be precarious. There are millions more people unemployed today than a year ago. The problem of underemployment is also acute in many developing countries. The past few years have seen the phenomenon of jobless growth. It is imperative to reverse that trend so that more growth translates into more jobs.

A skilled workforce is a prerequisite for the achievement of our objective of rapid and inclusive growth. Pursuing policies for the vocational training and skilled development of workers is a key policy priority and is directly connected with improving the productivity, quality and income of the labour force. The transfer of empowering technology for development, especially for women, is a major initiative that the post-2015 development agenda can undertake.

At the national level, Governments need to focus equally on small and medium-sized enterprises, rural industries and the informal sector and to put in place a conducive policy environment and direct support for the growth of those sectors through technology upgrading, skills enhancement, credit support and marketing assistance. Scaled-up investment in the creation of infrastructure, which is a key priority for developing countries, can also translate into substantial job opportunities, in particular for the unskilled and semi-skilled labour force.

It is equally important to pursue policies for employment-led growth at the international level. Trade barriers, as well as unfair trading practices in the markets of developed countries, continue to have a deleterious effect on employment growth in developing countries. The destruction of livelihoods through the inability of farmers in many developing countries to compete, for example, as a result of trade distorting subsidies in the developed world, is well known. The need to make globalization more inclusive is more urgent than ever. It will therefore be important for the post-2015 develoment agenda to meaningful address international systemic issues, in particular the global trade, investment and finance rules, in order to make those rules fairer and more equitable and supportive of the efforts of developing countries to eradicate poverty and to promote full and productive employment.

International labour mobility in the area of high-end skills has become an important aspect of global integration across countries. In that context, the post-2015 development agenda must facilitate the movement of skilled workers from developing to developed countries. The post-2015 development agenda must also ensure adequate policy space for developing countries to pursue industrialization and inclusive growth, while taking into account their own national circumstances and challenges.

In conclusion, we need to develop an agenda for international cooperation that places a central and overarching emphasis on poverty eradication. It should also assist developing countries in their efforts to pursue inclusive growth that provides them adequate policy space for economic diversification and industrial development, while meaningfully addressing international systemic issues, so as to create a genuinely conducive environment for development.

Mrs. Lalic Smajevic (Serbia): Ever since their adoption, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been high on the agenda of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. Serbia has embarked on a thorough social development process and has relied on the MDGs as guidelines in designing its national poverty reduction strategy. We have submitted MDG implementation progress reports on a regular basis.

In Serbia, poverty is regarded as a problem that must be tackled at its source. The design of our poverty reduction strategy is based on that premise and the issue of poverty has been placed within the broader framework of national development and European integration. Some significant progress has been achieved. Infant, child and maternal mortality rates, for instance, have decreased, while the compulsory school completion rate has remained consistently high.

Notwithstanding those achievements, not all segments of the population have benefited from such progress equally. Considerable discrepancies persist,

including disparities between the urban and the rural populations, the country's metropolitan and southern regions, those fit for work and persons with disabilities, and the rich and the poor. In 2008, for example, 98 per cent of the total population had received basic education and the secondary school enrolment rate was on the increase. However, about 15 per cent of young people aged between 15 and 19 years were left out of the education system.

Poverty eradication in Serbia reflects the worldwide trends of the pre- and post-crisis periods. By 2008, Serbia had attained its target of halving the number of poor people, as measured by the absolute poverty line. That went hand in hand with the reduction of unemployment until 2009. However, the situation deteriorated with the onset of the crisis. Unemployment and the number of poor people grew as a result of the crisis. Specific social groups are still affected by poverty to an above-average extent compared to the overall population.

Unemployment and inactivity remain the main causes of poverty and social exclusion across all segments of the population, yet some segments have been affected more severely than others. They include children, young people, the elderly — that is, those over 65 years of age — the rural population, persons without education, the Roma, refugees and internally displaced persons.

With regard to the achievement of the MDGs in Serbia, allow me to share some lessons learned in our work to date. A true national consensus has been reached on the achievement of the MDGs. Poverty reduction is regarded as a component of our wider development policy and of the European integration policy and process. Our country's poverty reduction strategy was developed through a participatory and consultative process that resulted in one document being implemented by four consecutive Governments. Strong coordination mechanisms, including increased planning, monitoring and reporting, were established, while each stakeholder — the Government, Parliament, local Governments, civil society organizations and international development partners, or donors — has been assigned its own task in the implementation of the strategy.

How can the MDGs be attained after 2015? First of all, society needs to have promising prospects. For Serbia, a European country, such prospects are provided by the European integration process. Secondly, the Goals should be incorporated into a clear and long-term plan and sustainable solutions applicable to the longer term and the principle of evidence-based policymaking should be observed. We must also channel the available funds and improve coordination among stakeholders. We need more synergy, coordination and cooperation and less competition among partners, in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

No Government can achieve that complex goal on its own. Its achievement depends on a strong partnership among civil society, the private sector, the media and other bodies. Poverty eradication, the achievement of full employment and social inclusion are challenges that require time and sometimes span several generations. Under the auspices of the United Nations, open consultations have been held in Serbia with the aim of identifying current worldwide problems and of proposing solutions. The consultations were held under the slogan "The world we want 2015" and should contribute to making the voices of citizens heard worldwide and to building strategic coalitions and partnerships that can help shape the post-2015 development agenda.

Serbia is among the 56 countries in which such consultations have taken place. Their goal was to define development directions and modalities for overcoming the emerging post-2015 global challenges. The discussions involved citizens, the private, public and civil sectors, politicians, the media and various organizations and institutions. In the quest to identify the said problems and render solutions in the post-2015 period, Serbia considers it is necessary to provide more and better jobs and decent employment; combat poverty and provide better support to vulnerable groups; ensure responsible governance and reliable institutions; create a culture of accountability, tolerance and social cohesion; provide higher-quality education, better health care and environmental conservation; ensure the equality of men and women; and regulate population migration and mobility.

Mr. Maksimychev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia welcomes the General Assembly's convening of this high-level meeting on achieving poverty eradication through full employment and decent work for all. Poverty eradication remains a primary priority and necessary condition to achieving sustainable development. As poverty is a multifaceted phenomenon, its causes cannot be ascribed solely to

low income. First and foremost, poverty reflects lack of opportunity.

The General Assembly's 2007 proclamation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008–2017) was of great importance to fostering the efforts of the international community towards halving the level of extreme poverty as set out in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2). We believe that one of the most important strategic goals of the Decade is to achieve full employment and decent work for all.

As we approach the 2015 milestone, the international community is seeking to enhance efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through enhanced effectiveness. Over the past five years, despite upheavals in the global financial and raw materials markets, the number of people living in dire poverty has fallen to record lows. Therefore, today we can speak of true successes resulting from the joint efforts of Governments, the United Nations system, civil society and other stakeholders. Nevertheless, the latest reports on achieving the MDGs speak of uneven progress in eliminating poverty. We consider it essential to step up multilateral efforts to assist regions that are lagging behind.

In the current circumstances, the issues of full employment and decent work in the framework of poverty elimination have been highlighted by intergovernmental cooperation. The Russian Federation is highly interested in actively participating in international efforts on labour, especially under the International Labour Organization. We are ready to undertake practical implementation efforts in ensuring decent work. We consider it important to strengthen coordination and mutual cooperation among all key partners, including the United Nations system, leading international organizations and regional integration organizations.

We call on countries to carry out comprehensive structural reforms as part of their macroeconomic and structural policies to foster the creation of productive employment and improved standards of living. We also consider it important to duly stress the importance of stimulating productive capacity, combating unemployment and creating decent work conditions in the context of achieving the elimination of poverty and achieving all-encompassing sustainability and equitable economic growth at all levels under the future global development agenda.

The Russian Federation affirms its commitment to international development cooperation and stands ready to engage constructively with a broad range of partners towards achieving the MDGs. Guided by the principles of solidarity and global partnership, we are gradually increasing our official development assistance, in line with the Government's international development assistance strategy, which was approved by Russian President Putin on 20 April.

Both independently and in cooperation with international organizations, including the United Nations system, Russia is implementing programmes and projects in food security, education, health care, establishing and strengthening the commercial and industrial capacity of recipient countries, environmental protection, and efficient governance. We continue to contribute significantly towards easing the external debt burden of the least developed countries. In 2013, Russian official development assistance was about $610 million. We shall continue to increase that assistance.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): First of all, Brazil aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Chair of the Group of 77 and China, and wishes to make the following intervention in its national capacity.

We are at a crucial juncture in our collective efforts to overcome one of the greatest challenges facing humankind, which is the eradication of poverty and the generation of welfare for all, especially in the developing countries of the South. In Rio, we committed ourselves to achieving those objectives by fostering equitable economic development with social inclusion, while promoting the sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems. The sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda should embody that new transformative model. Decent work stands out as a fundamental policy tool in that regard, not only because it provides income security, but also because of its social protection aspects.

Brazil's experience over the past decade proves that economic expansion and market forces alone cannot provide a solution to poverty eradication and the creation of decent jobs. Countries need to put in place strong social, economic and environmental policies aimed at ensuring that development will be inclusive with effective income distribution, access to public services, particularly health and education, and targeted action to mitigate and reverse the structural drivers of inequality.

Those programmes need to be coupled with appropriate macroeconomic policies that can ensure the necessary physical space for increased social expenditures, as well as better income redistribution through a less regressive tax system and the policy of sustained increase in the real value of the minimum wage. Their design must be aimed at ensuring the broadest possible coverage with special attention to vulnerable groups, including women, groups discriminated against on the basis of race or ethnicity, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

This is a formula that Brazil has used to achieve unprecedented results in the area of poverty reduction, social inclusion and job creation in recent years. Since 2003, around 40 million people — one-fifth of the population — have been lifted out of poverty. Many of them have joined an upward moving and growing middle class. As is well known, a number of social programmes have been adopted to achieve those results. Chief among them are the conditional cash transfer schemes, such as the Bolsa Familia — a family stipend — or the Bolsa Verde — a green stipend.

But decent work and full employment have played a central role in ensuring the sustainability of our results in fighting poverty and inequality in our country. The Brazilian Government adopted a national plan for employment and decent work in 2007, as a result of the joint efforts of various federal agencies under the coordination of the Ministry of Labour and Employment and on the basis of a broad process of consultations among Government, worker and business representatives, in the same spirit of the International Labour Organization (ILO) tripartite system of representation. Its main objectives are to tackle structural drivers of poverty and inequality in the labour market through the reduction of unemployment, underemployment and informal jobs, as well as gender inequality and racial discrimination through the expansion of social protection coverage and an increase in productivity, safety and health conditions at work, especially in rural areas.

The programme is organized around three priority goals: to generate more jobs with equal opportunity and treatment, to eradicate slave labour and child labour, and to strengthen tripartite stakeholders and social dialogue as a tool of democratic governance. Between 2003 and 2011, 17.5 million formal jobs were generated in Brazil. As of 2011, there were 46 million workers under formal job contracts. That is an increase of 50 per cent in nine years. Over the same period, the unemployment rate in major urban areas of Brazil decreased from 11.6 per cent to 5.5 per cent, which is almost full employment.

The fact that Brazil will host the two most important global sporting events over the next couple of years provides us with an invaluable opportunity to promote the decent work agenda. Efforts are being undertaken in coordination with the ILO and other agencies of the United Nations system in order to raise awareness and to effectively foster the creation of quality jobs associated with those events on the basis of tripartite collaboration. We have launched jointly with the ILO an initiative entitled "Decent work before and after 2014: fair games, fair play".

The progress achieved in Brazil can also be attained in other regions. As studies carried out by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean demonstrate, the benefits of fighting inequality through active public policies is already visible not only in Brazil, but throughout the whole Latin American and Caribbean region.

Finally, we wish to underscore that the debates around the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda provide us with a crucial opportunity to put together a set of goals and targets that can mobilize concrete action by decision-makers all over the world for achieving our common goal of eradicating poverty. Decent work and full employment are arguably the most effective drivers of a people-centred sustainable development agenda, along with strong social protection, backed by a State that prioritizes its role as a provider of welfare for all. The issue is critical for making progress in several of the goals we are currently working on for the post-2015 development agenda, in particular those on poverty eradication, reducing inequality, gender equality and the empowerment of women, economic growth, employment infrastructure and industrialization, among others. We must seize this opportunity to tap the full potential of decent work policies as a tool for achieving sustainable development.

Ms. Lu Mei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the convening by the President of the General Assembly of this high-level meeting on the them "Achieving poverty eradication through full employment and decent work for all in the post-2015 development agenda".

China aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The eradication of poverty is directly linked to the basic right to life and development of people in all countries, and is the priority concern of all States, especially developing countries, in their economic and social development. The post-2015 development agenda should continue to adopt poverty eradication and development as its core, espouse the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, respect the development model and the road to development freely chosen by States in light of their national conditions, and give full consideration to their different national situations, capacities and stages of development.

There has been some progress in international cooperation on poverty eradication since the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were formulated. The overall situation in poverty eradication does not inspire optimism. Nearly 1.3 billion extremely poor people still live on less than $1.25 per day — the international poverty line — and most of them reside in developing countries. As 2015 approaches, developing countries are still faced with many challenges in implementing the MDGs, and one of the most critical challenges is the issue of poverty eradication. This is the at the core of the ongoing implementation of the MDGs and the establishment of the post-2015 agenda. China calls upon the international community to make greater efforts in the following areas.

First, we must strengthen international cooperation for the eradication of poverty. The lack of development resources is one of the greatest challenges facing developing countries in the implementation of MDGs, especially in the area of poverty eradication. The primary task for the post-2015 agenda should be to resolve the most urgent issue of poverty eradication faced by developing countries, addressing not only the problem of extreme poverty, but also that of general poverty, and establishing both separate and cross-sectoral targets for the eradication of poverty. The international community needs to increase international cooperation for poverty eradication, effectively honour commitments in international cooperation for development, especially official development assistance, so as to provide sufficient financial and technical support and improve capacity-building for poverty eradication to effectively help developing countries in their efforts to eliminate poverty and backwardness.

Secondly, it is necessary to promote employment as an important driving force in poverty eradication. The creation of sustainable employment opportunities is an important means of eliminating poverty, promoting economic growth, fostering social integration and achieving social stability. States need to attach great importance to employment, make the promotion of employment a priority goal for economic and social development, and adopt development strategies and macroeconomic policies conducive to promoting employment. In this field, the international community needs to increase its support to developing countries and help them overcome difficulties, such as weaknesses in infrastructure and lack of expertise and funding, and create a better environment and more employment opportunities for them.

Thirdly, the international community should create an enabling external environment for developing countries to eliminate poverty. Under the negative effects of the financial crisis, the external development environment of developing countries still leaves no room for optimism. The international community needs to strengthen macroeconomic policy coordination, refine global economic governance and proceed from multiple dimensions, including financial, trade, investment and debt, to create an international development environment conducive to the eradication of poverty for States, particularly developing countries. Meanwhile, it needs to widely mobilize the forces of all parties, strengthen global partnership for development and work together to advance the global cause of poverty eradication.

China has made tireless efforts towards the realization of the MDGs and has achieved the MDG on halving our poor population ahead of schedule. But by international poverty standards, China still has a poor population of 100 million and still faces the difficult task of eliminating poverty, developing its economy and improving the living conditions of our people. China will do its utmost to implement our programme China's Outline for Development-oriented Poverty Reduction for Rural Areas (2011-2020) and further increase our efforts to reduce poverty and pursue development.

While trying to eradicate poverty at home, China is also working, within the framework of South-South cooperation, to provide assistance to other developing countries to the best of our ability and to share our experiences in poverty eradication with them for mutual development. China supports the placement of poverty

eradication at the centre of the post-2015 development agenda and is ready to work with others to promote the cause of poverty eradication in the world.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): I would like to begin by aligning my statement with that delivered by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We thank the President for organizing this high-level event on an issue as important as full employment and decent work for all in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. Looking towards the post-2015 era, the world is facing the daunting challenge of creating around 600 million new jobs over the next 15 years in order to keep pace with the growth of the labour force. While poverty eradication must remain the first and overarching priority of the post-2015 development agenda, full employment and decent work through sustained economic growth and productive capacity-building are critical to the achievement of the sustainable development goals whose design we are currently grappling with and to the implementation of the forthcoming post-2015 development agenda as a whole.

The recognition that employment and decent work constitute one of the main strategies for enabling people to address poverty led to their inclusion in 2005 in the new Millennium Development Goal 1.B — "Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people". That target, however, fails to directly link to and address the issue of productive capacity. The post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals, should therefore address some of those gaps, not only through the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in general, but also by clearly linking productive capacity, infrastructure development and economic growth to full employment and decent jobs.

It is essential that the post-2015 development agenda highlight the importance of job creation through an enabling environment, forward-looking macroeconomic policies, agricultural and industrial development, industrialization and the provision of adequate services, including social protection. Economic growth should be inclusive, pro-people and pro-planet and should generate employment. Strong support must be given to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, areas where large-scale job creation is possible. Innovative programmes such as employment guarantee schemes can provide poor workers with a minimum employment floor. Introducing a basic set of essential social transfers and services, as well as access to credit and financing, plus education for all, can help to achieve full employment and decent work for all.

In that context, I should mention the precarious situation of least-developed countries (LDCs), whose population is expected to nearly double by 2015 and will account for almost 40 per cent of world population growth during the next 40 years. A study by the International Labour Organization suggests that LDCs need an employment growth rate of 7 per cent in order to enable them to meet the MDGs, particularly MDG 1, as against the past decade's growth rate of 2.9 per cent per annum. This is an undoubtedly an alarming picture if one takes into account the poverty scenario and these countries' staggering capacity challenges.

In that context, it is imperative that international cooperation and global partnership join together to help this group of countries realize full employment and decent work in their respective milieus. Investments in skill-based training, vocational education, the promotion of business opportunities and duty-free, quota-free access to markets are key ingredients for generating employment in the LDCs. Flexible migration policies are also extremely important to achieving poverty eradication through full employment and decent work for an ever-growing workforce. Such linkages must be meaningfully incorporated into the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): Pakistan aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Poverty is not just about the absence of sufficient income. It is deprivation at various levels and in many areas. For the poor, it is endemic and pervasive. They face it every day. Lessons from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals show that poverty is multifaceted. In many societies, it carries the stigma of being a minority, belonging to a lower caste, having a disability or just being a woman. It is most intense when one is denied access to justice or health services. It manifests itself in illiteracy and a lack of productive skills. It is experienced profoundly when one is not heard politically. It is about being unequal. Put simply, poverty is the sum of the deprivations faced by an individual, a family, a community or a nation.

Poverty exists amid plenty on a global scale. Oxfam established only recently that the 85 richest people in the world own the same total amount of wealth as 3.5 billion poor people across the globe. This is the same world where 1.2 billion people eke out a living on the paltry amount of $1.25 a day. More critically, the gap between rich and poor has continued to widen even as overall global per capita income is exhibiting an upward trend. Eradicating poverty is therefore our biggest challenge. In the post-2015 world, the test of our resolve lies in addressing the factors that perpetuate poverty. In that regard, a holistic approach is critical. Evidence and experience gathered from developing economies clearly demonstrate that higher growth, when accompanied by inclusive policies, has a decisive impact on poverty reduction.

Pakistan very strongly endorses the linkage between economic growth, employment generation and the promotion of decent work opportunities. If extreme poverty is not eliminated all around the world by a certain year, our target date, all other proposed sustainable development goals will remain unachieved. Poverty eradication demands that we target five core elements. The first is our global determination to reduce the proportion of people living in poverty, and more specifically, a multilateral resolve to eradicate extreme poverty. The second is addressing deprivation through a holistic agenda. The third is a global and national framework that provides opportunities and evolves modalities enabling countries to promote economic growth and development. The fourth is a strong emphasis on generating livelihoods and employment for inclusive, equitable and productive and decent work. The fifth is the construction of social floors and welfare frameworks that can prevent the poor from slipping back into further poverty.

Poverty, however, will not be eliminated by affirmations and exhortations alone, important as they are. What we need is a sound policy framework and adequate resources at the national and international levels. In that regard, the United Nations has a role as both a catalyst and a contributor.

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking the President for the opportunity of speaking at today's meeting.

(*spoke in English*)

I am very pleased to speak on the important theme of today's high-level meeting on poverty eradication through full employment and decent work for all in the post-2015 development agenda. To begin, we would like to stress, as Canada has stressed elsewhere, that sustainable economic growth is a primary driver of poverty reduction. In 2010, nearly 1.2 billion people in developing countries — about 21 per cent of the world's population — lived on less than $1.25 per day. That is a remarkable decline from 1.8 billion — or 42 per cent of the population — which was the case in 1990. The reduction coincides with higher growth rates over the same period for many countries, highlighting the importance of growth to poverty reduction.

Recognizing the remaining challenges of poverty eradication, growth, in our judgement, needs to feature prominently in the post-2015 development agenda and is something that was a missing link in the Millennium Development Goals. However, to be most effective, aggregate growth is not enough. Growth must be inclusive, focused on the poor, sustainable and job-rich. A target unemployment level is, in our view, an essential part of the focus on sustainable growth. More and better employment and higher earnings are the primary means by which poor women and men raise their standard of living and achieve greater resilience and self-reliance. We must see job creation, therefore, as a critical characteristic of sustainable economic growth and central to the post-2015 development goals.

(*spoke in French*)

We must also ensure that the jobs created involve decent work. The quality of jobs must be measured, first, by their impact on individual and social well-being, including factors such as remuneration, security, equality and the fundamental right to work. Secondly, they must be measured in terms of how they impact economic growth, competition, productivity and diversification.

In terms of equality and fairness, we must focus particular attention on women and young people in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. We understand that women and young people are affected disproportionately by high levels of unemployment. Possessing skills that are in high demand will enable today's women and young people to become the drivers of future growth and thus absolutely necessary in years to come.

(*spoke in English*)

With a focus on decent work, we must also eradicate abusive labour practices. Child labour, in particular,

has no place in the world we want in 2030. To that end, Canada would like to see a global commitment to ending all forms of child labour, including its worst forms, also reflected in the 2015 goals. Jobs and livelihoods need to be connected with private sector growth, as the two are closely linked.

What are the transformative changes needed for poverty eradication? Setting an enabling environment for private sector growth is key, as more productive, higher-paying employment is largely the result of growth in the private sector. As the World Bank's research has shown, nine of ten jobs in developing countries are created by the private sector. In that respect, in addition to a focus on decent work, we need to see change related to elements essential for sustainable economic growth that benefits the poor.

We see three tiers of targets necessary here. At the base, targets should be set that capture a conducive investment climate, including sound economic and fiscal management, the rule of law, open trade and free markets governed by prudent policy and sound regulations, and a competitive business-enabling environment and access to infrastructure. Basic social protection systems complement a focus on sustainable growth and poverty reduction, as they are a means of directly supporting the poorest and the most vulnerable. Social protection systems also act as stabilizers for the economy, bolster the resilience of the poor and help prevent people from falling into poverty in the first place.

(*spoke in French*)

Secondly, we believe that small island developing States should benefit from the dynamic growth of the private sector in terms of productivity, new product diversification, service industry and merchandising, as well as growth and viable enterprises. Services that are essential to the business sector — such as finance — should also be developed.

(*spoke in English*)

Thirdly, we must ensure that people have the knowledge and competencies to take on new opportunities. A target is therefore needed, in our judgement, on education and training, linked with labour market demand, particularly among women and youth. Canada also favours identifying targets on growth in employment that are cross-cutting with other goal areas. Women's economic empowerment and environmentally sustainable growth are both areas that we would like to see woven into the approach to growth and employment — on the first, through targets on women's access to productive assets, building women's employment, businesses and skills, and increasing their participation in economic decision-making; and on the second, through targets on cleaner and more efficient production.

(*spoke in French*)

There is no doubt that the list of priorities is long. The elements I have mentioned today are part of an even longer list of potential priorities in the framework of the post-2015 goals. In the upcoming months, one important aspect of our work will be to affirm the most important challenges in terms of employment, growth, eradication of poverty and to define the priorities.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): I wish to thank the President for convening this meeting of the General Assembly. Malaysia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Malaysia is encouraged that the proportion of people living in extreme poverty — that is, on less than $1.25 per day — has reached new lows in all six developing regions in the past five years. Despite that positive development, much work remains as progress has been uneven and 1.2 billion people are still living on less than $1.25 per day, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Malaysia is concerned that the ongoing global economic and financial crisis has led to an increase in worldwide unemployment — from 170 million unemployed persons in 2007 to an unprecedented high of 202 million in 2015.

Allow me now to share my country's own experience in addressing the issue of poverty eradication. Since the 1970s, Malaysia has successfully reduced poverty that affected nearly half of the population in 1970, through the implementation of various poverty eradication initiatives and programmes. Notably, Malaysia has achieved the target of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on poverty reduction well ahead of schedule, by reducing poverty to about 2.8 per cent of the population today.

The successful implementation of poverty eradication programmes in Malaysia can be attributed to its rapid economic development, which has been facilitated by the successful power-sharing and political stability that Malaysia has enjoyed over the past 57 years. It can also be attributed to the Government's

strategic planning and effective implementation of economic programmes that include pro-poor strategies, coupled with continuous investments in physical infrastructure, education, human capacity-building and primary health-care services.

Among the prominent poverty eradication initiatives is the rural development scheme implemented by the Federal Land Development Authority of Malaysia. The land reform programme has successfully lifted citizens involved in the land distribution scheme out of poverty. It is carried out through planned and coordinated land development and socioeconomic activities that, in turn, have created hundreds of thousands of decent jobs. The scheme has successfully elevated the quality of life and brought social and economic benefits to 177,000 rural families in Malaysia to date.

Moving forward, the Government is currently focusing on disadvantaged groups, especially natives of Sabah and Sarawak living in the interior, the Orang Asli indigenous people, and estate workers in peninsular Malaysia. There are still pockets of people living without electricity, without a water supply and with limited access to health facilities. There are schoolchildren who have to make arduous daily trips to school. The Government has given its assurance that it will address the issues of the less fortunate, free them from the poverty trap and ensure that the prosperity resulting from the country's development will be enjoyed by all Malaysians.

To that end, the Government will intensify the implementation of economic programmes and the provision of basic amenities. The Government is also considering granting land titles to the Orang Asli, the indigenous people, and the natives of Sabah and Sarawak. That will enable them to benefit from integrated agricultural development programmes through agropolitan and contract-farming approaches. Those groups will also be given better access to infrastructure and public facilities, such as education and skills training, thereby creating more quality employment opportunities that will enhance their employability.

One of the most successful poverty eradication programmes implemented by Malaysia is the 1Azam programme. The programme provides a balance between direct aid and economic opportunities for the poor to become more financially self-sustaining. The programme provides assistance in four essential areas: job placement, creating small business enterprises, small service providers, and opportunities in agriculture. Between January and August 2013 alone, 25,544 people took part in the programme. Out of that figure, 16,470 1Azam participants were women. That is in line with the Government's recognition of the important role women play in Malaysia's socioeconomic development.

To ensure the effectiveness of the poverty-eradication programme, the Government has established the eKasih system, a centralized Malaysian national poverty data bank that stores information related to poverty. It can be accessed and used by all Government agencies and other related parties for the purpose of planning, coordination and monitoring of poverty-eradication programmes in Malaysia. Notably, the eKasih innovation was awarded the first prize in the United Nations Public Service Awards for 2012 in recognition of its significant contribution to poverty eradication in Malaysia.

Malaysia will continue to share its development experience in the field of poverty eradication with fellow developing countries at the regional and global levels, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the MDGs. The sharing of our development experience has been implemented since the 1980s mainly through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme, which is one element of the commitment of the Malaysian Government to the promotion of technical cooperation among developing countries under the South-South cooperation framework. Currently, more than 27,000 participants, mainly from the least developed countries and Africa, have benefited from Malaysia's sharing of experience and expertise. The programme will continue to further contribute in the upcoming post-2015 development agenda framework.

Let me conclude by emphasizing that poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon that extends beyond income poverty. For that reason, Malaysia is developing a multidimensional poverty index as a measure to address the non-income dimensions, such as education, health and living standards, in our efforts to eradicate poverty in a holistic manner.

Mr. Zehnder (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for organizing this thematic debate.

Over the past two decades, progress in the fight against poverty has been more rapid than ever before. That is due to economic development, appropriate policies and global mobilization in support of the

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Despite the progress achieved, however, more than 1 billion people are still living in conditions of extreme poverty. It is therefore our common duty to continue to carry out actions to achieve the MDGs.

Economic growth is a major factor, but it is insufficient for the reduction of poverty. In recent decades, growth has lifted millions of people out of poverty. At the same time, we note worsening income disparity, one of the most worrisome risks noted in the *Global Risks 2014* report of the World Economic Forum. It is therefore crucial to ensure that economic growth is inclusive and reflected in rising standards of living for the entire population.

To that end, the economy must offer good jobs that allow women and men to work in decent conditions. The lack of suitable jobs and the lack of prospects are at the root of economic privation and generate a sense of frustration and social exclusion, especially among young people. Young people are particularly affected by the problems of unemployment, low salaries and job instability. In addition, social exclusion and economic deprivation can push certain individuals towards illicit acts that jeopardize the development of peaceful societies. Thus, the benefits of decent employment go well beyond the economic dimension. Such jobs contribute to people's autonomy and self-esteem, while favouring peace and social cohesion.

Different policies contribute to the promotion of decent work and poverty eradication. Those should serve us as guides in the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda.

First, the decent work agenda, which was developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and endorsed by the United Nations, contributes to the promotion of inclusive development. The implementation of international labour standards should be encouraged in order to ensure decent working conditions for all, including migrant workers. In that regard, we must pay particular attention to the principles and fundamental rights of work. Those rights notably include freedom of association, the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour, and the elimination of discrimination in matters of employment and profession.

Secondly, more targeted initiatives must be implemented to introduce social protection mechanisms and to ensure their long-term economic and fiscal viability. In that regard, the Social Protection Floor Initiative, led by the ILO and the World Health Organization, and ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation No. 202 provide useful guidance in that regard. But we must ensure that social protection covers all groups of society, especially women, migrants and members of ethnic minorities, and we must facilitate the transfer of social benefits. Social protection is often linked to employment, and the gender perspective must be taken into account in the formulation and implementation of standards, guidelines and policies for the numerous women working in the informal private sector.

Thirdly, in view of a potential goal on education, we must underscore the direct link between employment and inclusive and quality educational systems that develop skills responding to the needs of the labour market. This issue concerns all economies, whatever their level of development, because of the increase in specialized jobs and the importance of innovation to stimulate sustainable growth.

Mr. Maope (Lesotho): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

At the outset, the African Group would like to underscore that full employment and decent work are essential elements in achieving the eradication of poverty, the reduction of inequality, and respect for human dignity. Employment objectives need to become central to global actions and mechanisms. Therefore, a development agenda that gives priority to the creation of productive employment, especially for young people, is of the utmost importance for the African Group. The capacity behind employment generation is fundamentally linked to reviving and enhancing productive policies through adequate finance, investment, technology and trade policies.

According to the African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa,

> "More than 70 per cent of Africans earn their living from vulnerable employment, as African economies continue to depend heavily on the production and export of primary commodities. Investment continues to be concentrated in capital-intensive extractive industries, with limited forward and backward linkages with the rest of the economy." (*E/2013/17, para. 48*)

Wider diversification from primary commodity production is therefore needed, as is intensified value addition in commodity sectors.

In the same vein, the African Group would like to refer to the document entitled *The MDG Report 2013: Assessing Progress in Africa Toward the Millennium Development Goals*, which was co-authored by the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme. According to that report, it is critical to reduce inequalities in Africa, and one of the causes of those inequalities is the current structure of African economies. The reports states that:

> "Inequalities result in part from the enclave structure of most African economies, which concentrates economic activity in the extractive and commodity-producing sectors. With limited spillover to other sectors, such production patterns generate few jobs, concentrate wealth in resource-rich sectors, encourage inequality and sow the seeds of social unrest."

To achieve the transformation of African economies, the report recommends the promotion of industrialization and structural transformation through, inter alia, economic diversification and value chains linking raw material producers to end users. For those reasons, the Group is of the view that job creation requires sustained economic growth and a structural transformation of African economies through industrialization that focuses on value addition and economic diversification. In that regard, it is essential to achieve sustained and job-rich industrial development in Africa by increasing manufacturing value added at a higher rate than population growth and by increasing the share of manufacturing value added in gross domestic product.

Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are reported to have the highest ratio of people living in extreme poverty, far below the $2-a-day threshold, despite the marked decline in extreme poverty in developing regions. The reduction of the number of the poor in sub-Saharan Africa has proved difficult for almost a decade, with the share of workers in vulnerable employment near 80 per cent. Vulnerable employment presents a particular challenge to poverty reduction because workers in those categories lack the resilience to economic shocks and other socioeconomic challenges. For example, rising food prices force poor households to reduce spending on nutritious food and reduce their access to essential social services, such as health care. The net result is the loss of gains made on the health-related Millennium Development Goals.

We are deeply concerned that the deceleration of employment growth has further extended to young people. Global youth unemployment is said to be three times as high as the corresponding adult rate. Youth constitute 40 per cent of the 200 million jobless people worldwide. This is a major constraint in our collective efforts to eradicate poverty and to build a peaceful world. In that connection, education and training policies should be aimed at supporting economic development and at preparing citizens for productive employment based on the requirements of new labour markets.

I also wish to speak to the aspect of poverty that requires special attention in Africa. That is a reference to rural poverty. The disparities in development between rural and urban areas prevent most populations in developing countries from contributing significantly to their national economies. The issues of unemployment and underemployment are prevalent in rural areas. In this context, I wish to emphasize the critical importance of investing in rural development as a viable strategy for fighting poverty.

In conclusion, I wish to underscore the importance of education as a tool for poverty eradication. One of Africa's most import assets is its human resources. To make gainful use of that resource, we need to invest in skills, academic and technical development. We should therefore pursue education that goes beyond primary school and even secondary school to encompass vocational and tertiary education. It is of critical importance to broaden the scope of education in order to meet the demands of industrialization. Similarly, capacity-building and technology transfer are essential tools in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Mrs. Nazaire (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank President Ashe for convening this high-level meeting on a subject of the highest importance, which should be useful in elaborating the post-2015 development agenda.

My delegation also associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Bolivia and Benin on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the least developed countries, respectively.

The eradication of poverty has been rightly established as a central element of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and, judging by the ongoing work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, it should continue to occupy that pivotal place, which is explicitly coupled to the objectives of full employment and decent work. Guided as much by economic imperatives as by a moral obligation that places humankind at the centre of our concerns, unprecedented awareness and international coordination have achieved the goal of halving extreme poverty five years before the deadline. However, we must not rest on our laurels, because the task of the total eradication of poverty, the sine qua non of sustainable development, remains huge. Moreover, the recent global financial crisis and its significant negative impact on employment has demonstrated the fragility and potentially reversible nature of the progress achieved to date.

For three years now, the Haitian Government has implemented and accelerated a whole series of measures and social protection programmes targeting the most vulnerable populations and aimed at combatting the scourges of extreme poverty, in particular the fight against hunger and the lack of decent incomes in rural and urban areas. The results are very encouraging, but are only the first step in a long-term process. We are determined to tackle the transformative change that can guarantee a strengthening of the triptych of poverty eradication, full employment and decent work.

In that context, my delegation would like to raise three points for our general consideration that seem relevant and interconnected.

First, poverty eradication and full employment cannot be achieved without a strong private sector driven by substantial long-term investments. For the first time ever, Haiti, the only least developed country in the Americas, now has many leaders who come directly from the business community. All their efforts are focused on ending Haiti's decades-long model of international economic dependency by working to strengthen State capacity and establish a legal and macroeconomic framework attractive to entrepreneurs and investors. In that regard, we have called on our partners in the international community to take that new fact into account by, for example, simplifying the procedures for access to project funding by bilateral and multilateral donors, and by building the Haitian private sector's capacity for absorption and for developing viable projects.

Secondly, by taking the multidimensional aspects of poverty into consideration, we should be able to place the emphasis on sound public policy, prioritizing fundamental areas with high added value that can maximize opportunities for equal employment and decent work. Not surprisingly, health and, above all, education, are at the top of the priority list for the Haitian Government, with its programme of compulsory and free universal education.

Thirdly and lastly, the major obstacles to poverty reduction that experts have identified, which include income inequality and environmental insecurities, demand responsibility, creativity and vision. They assume a State strong enough to fulfil its regulatory tasks of strategizing, regulating and, where necessary, redistributing. Regardless of the legitimate debate on the specifics of the solutions that have been proposed, this is one of the main lessons underpinning the economist Thomas Picketty's book on the structural inequality of wealth in market economies, which is currently being discussed in every academic circle and in the major centres of economic and financial decision-making.

Mr. Och (Mongolia): I would like to concur with previous speakers on the importance of this very timely and crucial high-level meeting.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

As we approach the overall target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015, our common aim is to accelerate our joint efforts to complete the unfinished business of the MDGs. Advancing and completing the most off-track MDG is the starting point of the post-2015 development agenda, but as we all agree, the latter must be more comprehensive, balanced, ambitious and transparent in addressing that challenge. The eradication of poverty remains the overarching objective of the international community, and it should be central to any proposal on sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda.

Achieving poverty eradication through full employment and decent work for all is a central element of national development strategies and international policies. As a result of the world economic and financial

crisis of 2008 and 2009, the rate of poverty reduction has been slow. The world economy is likely to create only half of the 80 million jobs that will be needed over the next two years if we are to reach pre-crisis employment rates. In this situation, decent work is a global priority. Between 2015 and 2030, we will have to create about 670 million jobs — and today, 75 million young people are currently unemployed. We must focus not only on the quantity but on the quality of jobs; what people need is decent work.

Reducing poverty and unemployment has been the most pressing development challenge in Mongolia for the past 20 years. The Government has taken measures to articulate and implement a strategy aimed at reducing poverty and promoting inclusive economic growth. According to our fifth national report on the MDGs, our poverty head-count has declined by more than 11 percentage points, from 38.7 per cent in 2010 to 27.4 per cent in 2012. The sharp poverty decline of recent years is attributed mainly to effective Government policies on social welfare, the labour market, food supplies and improvements in maternal and child health. The poverty rate is nonetheless unacceptably high for a country undergoing rapid economic growth. We urgently need to focus on building resiliency and social protection in order to reduce poor and marginal populations' vulnerability. Past experience has shown that while non-targeted welfare measures, such as cash handouts, have some short-term benefits, they do not result in sustained poverty reduction.

Our unemployment rate, which stood at 11.6 per cent in 2009, fell to 9.9 per cent in 2010 and 7.7 per cent in 2011. In 2012, we amended our law on employment support, enabling us to implement a number of job-creation ventures through various programmes. A programme for employing Mongolian citizens with income is under way and has created jobs for 150,000 people. It is vital that Mongolia diversify its economy and create alternative employment sources, especially for young people. In that regard, the Government has introduced special programmes such as one for pre-employability for young people and a sub-programme on support for youth and student employment, aimed at reducing unemployment among young people. One of Mongolia's key challenges is creating a skilled workforce in order to improve its competitiveness internationally.

The MDGs have been contributing to development at the national and international level since 2001, but we must do more. In that regard, achieving poverty eradication through full employment and decent work for all should be included as a top priority in the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. Grunditz (Sweden): The Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden, appreciate this opportunity for a dialogue on how employment and decent work for all can contribute to poverty eradication. The Nordic countries are deeply committed to contributing to poverty eradication and decent work for all, and, of course, we are also deeply committed to contributing to the post-2015 process.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we recall, were concretely formulated and limited in number. That made them a successful tool for raising awareness and cooperation. However, despite the success of the MDGs, extreme poverty, inequalities and other impediments to sustainable development still exist. In our efforts to develop a new universal agenda for sustainable and inclusive development, we must consider the lessons learned from the MDGs. Clearly, one important lesson is that poverty eradication must be at the heart of the agenda — in this case, at the heart of the sustainable development agenda. If we focus on inequalities and on leaving no one behind, we can achieve our goals.

A job, with an income, is the primary route out of poverty. In every society and at all times, however, there are also people who need social protection: children, persons with disabilities and the elderly. Job creation requires economic policies that are deliberately aimed at promoting employment-intensive investments and the employability of all women and men. Creating decent jobs is a pressing global development priority and should be at the heart of the new development goals for the post-2015 period.

Governments have an important role in promoting employment and skills-enhancing business environments. To ensure decent work, Governments have a responsibility to promote occupational safety and health, and to set minimum wages. It is also important to create a level playing field for all enterprises. This is indeed a huge challenge for every Government to address.

The rule of law and democratic, effective and accountable Government institutions are also fundamental building blocks for sustainable and inclusive economic development and for a predictable

business environment. A crucial constraint for the growth of the private sector in many low-income countries and for trade is access to reliable electricity and transport infrastructure. Access to reliable electricity and improved transport infrastructure will facilitate economic integration and trade. This will create economic growth and create jobs. Improved infrastructure is also a strong driver for inclusive growth and job creation for women and men living in poverty. Infrastructure investments must, however, be accompanied by investments in social sectors and social protection. The productivity of the work force depends on non-discriminatory access to and quality of the education system, including technical and vocational training, and the primary health care system.

Gender equality and women's economic empowerment are areas where progress is needed and overdue. The fact that women in some places are still denied the right to work and to own property does not make any sense — not least in terms of economic policy. No country can afford to deny women their rights to participate in economic life. Women's economic empowerment may be the single most important contributing factor to the eradication of poverty. We must reduce the burden of women's unpaid work and guarantee equal pay for equal work.

In conclusion, we have the knowledge and the resources to create decent work and social protection floors for all women and men, reduce inequalities and eradicate extreme poverty. The post-2015 development agenda will show our political will to do so.

Mr. Hahn Choonghee (Republic of Korea): Since poverty is multidimensional, progress towards its eradication is linked to other focus areas. These include economic growth, education, health, gender equality and governance. Among them, employment, today's theme, has long been recognized as a key enabler in the fight against poverty. As more than 200 million people worldwide remain unemployed and young people are affected most by prolonged economic hardship, we need to tackle this issue as a matter of urgency.

However, despite conventional wisdom, growth does not necessarily guarantee more and better jobs. The majority of poor people in the developing countries already have jobs, most of which are insecure and paid inadequately. As such, in order for employment to substantively contribute to poverty eradication, we need to encourage economic growth that not only increases job opportunities but also enhances the quality of jobs. In this connection, we believe that good education, as well as education for all, is critical and imperative, considering Korea's poverty eradication experience.

Related to this, we would like to draw attention to the decent work agenda of the International Labour Organization, which advocates, first, the promotion of full and productive employment; secondly, social protection; thirdly, respect for fundamental principles and rights at work; and, fourthly, social dialogue. We believe that the agenda duly focuses on social and environmental factors as well, as on economic aspects of employment, and that its balanced and integrated approach can be a useful guideline in the journey to achieving sustainable poverty eradication.

Creating decent work requires multifaceted efforts and cooperation at the national and the international levels alike. At the national level, especially in developing countries, priority should be given to increasing the productivity of the agricultural sector, which makes up a large portion of their industries. Such an emphasis will not only result in significant employment opportunities, but can also simultaneously help to address inequalities such as the gaps between the rural and urban areas. The experience of Korea's famous Saemaul Undong national rural anti-poverty campaign of the 1970s and 1980s clearly demonstrates the benefits of such a strategy. "Saemaul Undong" literally means "new village/community movement" and could serve as a reference for poverty eradication and rural development in developing countries.

In addition, increased focus needs to be placed on the creative economy with a view to quality job creation. By harnessing each country's unique cultural assets combined with creative ideas, states can benefit from the creation of high-quality and high-value-adding employment opportunities.

At the international level, a favourable international environment for quality job creation will be crucial. This can be achieved by facilitating greater private investment and establishing open and fair trade and financial systems, with special attention given to the least developed countries. Complementing traditional North-South cooperation, South-South and triangular cooperation channels should also be actively pursued.

In all of our collective efforts, however, we must ensure that poverty eradication through job creation initiatives does not place any strains on environmental

sustainability through increased resource consumption. As such, efforts for job creation should be accompanied by transformative measures for a greener economy. In this context, we believe that advanced modern technology, such as smart agricultural technology, could serve as a good vehicle for job promotion and increased income, as well as for a sustainable environment through a virtuous cycle. The negative consequences of poverty on human lives are prevalent and persistent. That is why we should reaffirm our determination to free humankind from all forms of poverty.

In conclusion, to realize that goal, the Republic of Korea reiterates its commitment to actively participating in international efforts towards poverty eradication, in particular by continuing to increase official development assistance and by sharing our experience in poverty eradication. We further commit ourselves to constructively engaging in the upcoming discussion on the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. Karaçay (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this important and timely discussion. Turkey remains committed to efforts aimed at eradicating poverty at all levels and to helping create a sustainable future for all, based on an approach encompassing economic, social and environmental aspects.

It is widely acknowledged that global economic progress has brought about widespread improvements in living standards for many in general. Nevertheless, inequalities, the inequitable sharing of goods, unemployment, lack of social protection, insufficiency or non-existence of human development services, lack of access to financial services and low quality of well-being are still commonly shared concerns. Long-term poverty eradication requires sustainable, inclusive economic growth. Economic growth is necessary but not sufficient to reduce poverty and inequality and to improve living standards.

In order to transform itself into prosperity and to eradicate poverty and inequality, growth needs to be inclusive, comprehensive and sustainable and should have a lasting and positive impact on poor people. Creating more productive and decent jobs is key to increasing the future prosperity of all and to eradicating poverty. Sustained growth needs to be inclusive and comprehensive. All countries should create the appropriate enabling conditions for that purpose. Sound macroeconomic policies that take investment financing needs into account and strengthen financial integration provide favourable conditions for investment, trade, exports and the mobilization of capital for investment, all of which are important drivers for growth.

Sustainable economic growth and trade are the key drivers of national and international prosperity and can contribute to global security. That requires an inclusive and open multilateral trade system that allows all countries to engage in global markets. The promotion of full employment, productive jobs and decent work, with an emphasis on young people, women, the eradication of inequality, access to financial services, adequate social protection and the appropriate training are essential to achieving poverty eradication. Open, accountable and effective institutions that reduce the cost and risk of investement, reward entrepreneurship and innovation and create vibrant and competitive markets provide opportunities for full employment and quality jobs.

In conclusion, increased investment in a range of sectors, such as clean energy, industrial production, education, manufacturing, services, agriculture, transport and infrastructure, provides the foundation for sustainable and inclusive growth. That will build the basis for us to provide numerous possibilites for full employment and decent work in the post-2105 development agenda.

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): I wish to thank the President for the opportunity to share our views on the issue of employment and decent work in the post-2015 development agenda. I also wish to align my statement with that delivered by the Permanent Representative of Bolivia earlier this morning on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

Indonesia attaches the utmost importance to poverty eradication not only as the ultimate goal of development but also, most notably, as a reflection of our country's constitutional mandate, which upholds the basic objective of improving public welfare and social justice for all its people. It is widely recognized that poverty is a multidimensional challenge and is the cause, as well as a consequence, of the social dilemmas that poor people face.

The creation of sustained employment opportunities is the key to reducing inequality and eradicating poverty, while promoting economic growth. Earning an income through employment ultimately increases consumption and growth. Employment also addresses the social dimensions by facilitating access to education and

health care. For that purpose, we believe that our future development agenda should set the goal of employment and decent work. To be specific, the goal may include elements at the national level, such as implementing development strategies conducive to job creation, giving top priority to the promotion of full and productive employment for women and young people, increasing support for the private sector, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, strengthening public employment and human resources services, improving the integrated mechanism for employment and social welfare, promoting decent work and establishing a harmonious environment for employees.

At the international level, the goal may include the following elements: mainstreaming job creation into the global macroeconomic policy, increasing input to developing countries in terms of financial assistance, scientific research, technological cooperation and vocational training, and improving the productivity of developing countries and the development of their labour-intensive industries.

While promoting employment as a goal for our future development agenda, we also need to underscore the link between the goal of employment and other areas that concern livelihoods. The link to which I refer is a social protection agenda, which can safeguard people's well-being and improve their standard of living. The employment goal or agenda must be strengthened by a social protection agenda.

In that connection, we are very pleased that employment and social protection floors are incorporated as paired elements in line with the outcomes of major conferences on development. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288, annex), as well as our deliberations in the discussions of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, underscore that issue. An adequate social protection system helps to reinforce equitable growth. Social protection can distribute growth and serve as a tool to bring about social cohesion and ensure equity.

Finally, I wish to emphasize that the future development agenda needs to reflect a goal that can promote growth through a global effort. The creation of full employment and decent work for all, as well as social protection floors, should be the goal. We should achieve that not only at the national but also at the international level.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt): I would like to associate my comments with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Bolivia earlier this morning on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

Poverty eradication is the global challenge facing the world today and is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development in developing countries, as we affirmed in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" (resolution 66/288, annex). The importance of sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth to achieve poverty eradication and the Millennium Development Goals cannot be overemphasized.

The progress made during the first decade of the current century was extremely uneven and slow and efforts failed to reach millions of people, including women and children, in particular in the least developed countries and Africa, where there is currently the highest number of poor people. Furthermore, such failures severely threaten middle-income countries and the global economic situation with a reversal of economic growth and an increase in the level of poverty in those countries.

The prospects for achieving the agreed poverty reduction targets and the other development goals by 2015 seem extremely bleak. The constraints facing the fight against poverty arising from the current financial and economic global crisis, the continuing food insecurity and the challenges caused by climate change are a major source of concern for developing countries, as well. Poverty manifests itself in different forms and involves issues of economic, social, environmental and institutional dimensions. In that context, much needs to be done in order to reverse the declining international resource flows caused by inadequate financial assistance for development, the worsening terms of international trade, widespread unemployment, the job crisis and other factors. A number of measures can contribute to the promotion of economic growth and the eradication of poverty.

The first such measure is the promotion of productive capacities and the strengthening of agricultural development. Secondly, debt restructuring should be one of the various financial assistance instruments. The third measure is international trade expansion. Developed countries should be urged to remove trade barriers and agricultural subsidies, which constitute

serious impediments to market access by developing countries. The fourth measure is market access in developed countries for the agriculture, manufactured goods and services of developing countries, which would help them create productive jobs. The fifth measure is the facilitation of the transfer of technology by developed countries to the developing world. The sixth measure is the reinforcement of employment and decent work, as those are crucial means to improving living standards.

The recession and increased competition have even lowered earnings for workers employed in the informal sector. Consequently, progress in reducing working poverty has slowed. In 2011, there were an estimated 456 million workers living on less than $1.25 dollars a day. If poverty had continued declining at pre-crisis rates, the number of working poor would have been lowered by 50 million.

Young people are disporportionately affected by unemployment and overrepresented in the informal sector and among the working poor. In 2011, 12.6 per cent of young people aged 15 to 24 were unemployed, as compared with 4.6 per cent of adults. The number of discouraged young workers, who are not counted among the unemployed because they are not actively seeking employment, has increased sharply in many countries as well. Early labour market experience is a key driver of personal and social empowerment. A difficult transition from school to work has a negative impact on long-term earning prospects and increases the risk of unemployment later in life. Therefore, exclusion from productive activity will have negative consequences on the well-being of the current and future generations of young people. We support the Global Jobs Pact, which provides a useful framework for countries to formulate an appropriate policy package specific to their national situation and priorities, and call for continued coordination and coherence in the implementation of the Global Jobs Pact to avert the job crisis.

Enhancing human resources capacity for higher, more creative and productive employment and decent work for all is vital for poverty reduction. In that regard, we would like to emphasize the role of the public sector in the promotion of human resource development and the role of the United Nations system and the contribution from the private sector and civil society in supporting the actions and priorities of national Governments.

We continue to believe that poverty is the most pervasive violation of human and development rights. An effective and meaningful global campaign against the scourge of poverty requires poverty eradication to be placed at the core of national strategies and international cooperation. National Governments carry a critical pivotal role to play in that regard and do, indeed, have the ultimate responsibility to ensure the success of the campaign against poverty. We have a firm belief that a successful pursuit of national policies needs to be supported by a conducive international enabling environment and continued support from the international community. In fact, the whole international community needs to engage more in genuine internaitonal cooperation and implement concerted policies in a mutually supportive manner in order to ensure the achievement of concrete progress towards the realization of the established international rules and targets.

Mr. Donoghue (Ireland): I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to address this high-level meeting. At the outset, let me say that Ireland aligns itself with statement made by the observer of the European Union.

We have heard already this morning a range of statistics, but the fact remains that, with over 208 million people without work worldwide, including 75 million young people, and a further 800 million working people living below the $2-per-day poverty line, securing full and productive employment and decent work for all is an urgent personal and universal challenge for a billion people and, by extension, for us all. The fact that 8 per cent of the world's population enjoy almost 50 per cent of global income implies that the remaining 92 per cent of us are struggling for the remaining 50 per cent. That, in turn, means that the employment and decent work challenge is not just about more and better jobs, but also about addressing income inequality.

With an estimated 2.3 million people dying from work-related accidents each year, the employment and decent work challenge is also about including safety standards in the workplace and ensuring accountability for violations of workers' rights. With workers and trade unions across the world often suffering intimidation, repression and violence, the employment and decent work challenge is also about protecting civil society's place and human rights defenders.

As the outcome document (resolution 68/6) of the Secretary-General's high-level event last September

stated, the post-2015 agenda should reinforce the international community's commitment to poverty eradication and sustainable development. In doing so, it should build on the foundations laid by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), complete their unfinished business and respond to new challenges.

In designing the post-2015 framework, we must learn from the MDGs and ensure that we address the multidimensional nature of poverty and recognize the interrelationship between different themes and goals. That means that achieving poverty eradication will require progress not just on income poverty, but across a number of areas, including food and nutrition security, gender equality and women's empowerment, peaceful societies, the rule of law and capable institutions.

When considering how best to promote poverty eradication through full and productive employment and decent work for all, we must take a broad approach and address the many issues, which will create an environment for full and productive employment and decent jobs. Please allow me to put forward five short points in that regard.

First, we must promote greater access to social protection, particularly for vulnerable groups. Adequate social protection can reduce the risk of people falling into poverty during periods without work, help people who are unable to participate in the labour force to live their lives with dignity, and provide their dependents with the opportunity to attend school or join the work force. That is an important foundation upon which to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Seondly, given that access to more and better jobs requires improvements in basic education outcomes, the post-2015 agenda must make a strong commitment to ensuring equal access for all to quality primary and secondary education with a particular focus on girls. In addition, we need to look closely at the relationship between human capital and the skills required by the economy. In that regard, we must support greater access to vocational training, as well as technological, engineering and scientific skills.

Thirdly, to address the gender gaps in global employment, the post-2015 framework must seek to ensure equal access to employment opportunities for women and equal pay for equal work. In addition, it must address all the barriers to women's involvement in the labour force, including by ensuring equal access to markets, justice systems and financial services, ensuring equal rights to all who inherit land, property and other productive resources and assets, and by ensuring women's sexual, reproductive, health and rights.

Fourthly, we know that growth in agriculture is on average twice as effective in reducing povery as growth in other areas. For that reason, the post-2015 agenda must include targets that strengthen the ability of smallholder farmers to sustainably increase their productivity and improve their livelihoods. The post-2015 agenda must also support developing countries in their efforts to promote economic diversification and achieve greater added value on domestic raw materials. In addition, it must highlight the potential employment and growth opportunities associated with a shift towards sustainable development, as economies place greater emphasis on resource sufficiency, on sustainable production and consumption and on decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation.

Finally, we can all identify situations which prove that without peace and improvements in governance at all levels, we will simply be unable to fulfil any of our ambitions to eradicate poverty and achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all. By strengthening the effectiveness and accountability of Government institutions, protecting the freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, prioritizing stable macroeconomic policies underpining an open rules-based multilateral trading system and impartially enforcing the rule of law, the post-2015 agenda can further create an environment for improved investment, greater economic output, more social cohesion and a more equal society.

Those are just some of the matters, which, if included in the post-2015 development agenda, I believe could support all of us in achieving poverty eradication, full and productive employment and decent work for all. I would go further and say that, without them, we are in danger of failing in our first priority.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): Taking into account the late hour and the very limited time, let me reiterate that we are ready to align ourselves with all the previous and excellent observations and commitments. I would like to say, however, that yesterday, the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, drew the attention of participants to the Astana Economic Forum and second World Anti-Crisis Conference on this

very issue of the reduction of inequality and poverty eradication. It is very important that representatives of the United Nations, in particular Under-Secretary-General Acharya, the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Sajdik, and some other colleagues participated in the forum and that they will, I believe, be ready to share their impressions of that global meeting on their return.

I would also like to draw attention to the remarks made by my President that, despite being in the depths of poverty, millions of people show great dynamism and vitality. My President therefore strongly urges the international community to depoliticize economic relations, not to create artificial contrasts between countries and regions, and to avoid the rhetoric of conflict. As a result, he recommends strengthening our collective capacity to assess the world's potential for economic growth and the threats.

As an outcome of the Astana Economic Forum and second World Anti-Crisis Conference, the participants adopted the concept of a world anti-crisis plan. That concept has been put forward for the attention of and consideration by States Members of the United Nations with a view to their taking some robust steps to that end. My country is ready, together with the United Nations, the World Bank and other international organizations, to create a platform that is conducive to the drawing up of the complex road map on poverty eradication.

We understand that each Member States is responsible for its own progress. For that reason, my country has launched a strategy for a much longer term than the post-2015 development agenda, called Kazakhstan 2050, which is a vision of our country's long-term plan for its development. We are ready to share our success story, best practices and experience with other countries in order to achieve our noble goal of eradicating poverty.

Ms. Moleko (South Africa): At the outset, my delegation wishes to thank the President for having convened this high-level meeting. My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the Permanent Representatives of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of Lesotho on behalf of the African Group, respectively.

Three years remain before the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty comes to an end in 2017. We also have only one year until the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which have already helped to spur unprecedented progress in reducing poverty. However, much more needs to be done, since many of our countries still face the challenges of eradicating the scourge of poverty, along with inequality and unemployment. Those in poor communities, who mainly live in rural areas and depend largely on agriculture for their livelihood, are the most affected by those three challenges. Agriculture constitutes a significant part of the economies of African countries and remains a key sector for poverty eradication and employment creation. It continues to absorb a large portion of the working population in many developing countries, particularly in Africa.

My delegation firmly believes that the African continent has the potential to feed itself, to eliminate poverty and to contribute significantly to the global food market. It is therefore imperative that global plans take into account the specific conditions and challenges in the areas where agriculture remains the main economic activity. Some regions have further to go than others in that regard and poverty eradication programmes must be scaled up to reach the poorest and most marginalized groups, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

The African continent has designated 2014 as the Year of Agriculture in Africa in order to speed up its drive for food security. That cannot be achieved without the support of the international community on initiatives such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and the fulfilment of the commitments made at the L'Aquila summit.

South Africa also faces the triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment. Given the persistence of those challenges, in that connection we have drawn up a national development plan, which is my country's socioeconomic blueprint for what the country should do to eradicate poverty, increase employment and reduce inequality by 2030. In that context, we attach great importance to the theme of this high-level meeting.

As we prepare for the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, we need to consider ambitious strategies that can contribute to a sustainable impact on the structural problems of pervasive poverty, inequality and unemployment. The eradication of poverty should remain the overarching priority that informs the vision of the post-2015 development agenda. By ensuring an adequate means of implementation and by addressing challenges such as inequality, that objective can become a reality. It is

imperative that the policies and development efforts targeted at poverty eradication address not only the challenges but also the opportunities associated with sustainable development at both the international and the national levels.

Employment is a leading contributor to and the outcome of growth and development. Employment objectives should therefore be central to global actions and mechanisms. They require international cooperation that assists developing countries through actions at the level of international economic, financial, trade, technology and social systems in order to support and facilitate the efforts of developing countries. Developed countries should refrain from actions that create barriers to the efforts and progress of such countries.

In conclusion, in embracing the challenge of eradicating poverty, my delegation is keenly aware of the need to significantly accelerate the global efforts to implement, in a decisive and bold manner, the commitment made by our leaders in the historic United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) to sparing no effort in the fight against poverty. A strengthened global partnership for development in the context of a post-2015 development agenda remains the key to success in that regard.

Mrs. Carrion (Uruguay) (spoke in Spanish): At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statement made earlier this morning by the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolovia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The concept of extreme poverty set out in the Millennium Development Goals does not reflect the complexity and increasing inequality of today's world. For that reason, we understand that poverty eradication must remain a goal in itself and not be only a vision in the new international agenda.

Similarly, it should be taken into account that poverty is multidimensional and is not expressed in national income per capita. That is why we are fighting for the elaboration and implementation of an efficient and inclusive post-2015 development agenda that focuses on sustainable development goals aimed at eradicating poverty and promoting gender equality and the rights of women, youth and children, particularly those who live in situations of poverty, exclusion and marginalization.

Despite the improvement in living standards in recent decades, most workers in developing countries continue to have informal and precarious jobs, with low incomes, uncertain prospects and limited protection against social, economic and environmental risks. Job opportunities for full time work with regular salaries are limited, especially for women, who are underrepresented in the formal economic sector in most regions. Decent work is essential for the well-being of persons. In addition to generating income, it facilitates social and economic progress and strengthens the dignity of persons, their families and their communities.

Throughout the world, young people of both sexes are making an important contribution as productive workers, entrepreneurs, consumers, citizens, members of civil society and agents of change. Although young people are genuine national capital, in many cases they are extremely vulnerable and have to face a high degree of economic and social uncertainty. Often, we do not avail ourselves of their full potential because they have no access to productive decent work.

The lack of decent work for present day youth reflects and perpetuates the vicious circle of poverty; lack of access to education and adequate training and precarious jobs lead to the transmission of poverty from one generation to the next. Promoting worker protections includes decent working conditions, good salaries, adequate workday and sanitary conditions and security in work. The situation of migrant workers also requires attention. It is important for Governments to make efforts to integrate migrant workers completely into society, facilitate family reunions in accordance with the specific laws and norms of each country and promote an environment of harmony, tolerance and respect.

To conclude, it is Uruguay's understanding that economic growth should go hand in hand with social inclusion, working towards poverty eradication through social protection policies, programmes and systems that bring about an inclusive society with sustainable development.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.